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(22) DM Kitazawa: PM Hatoyama thinking of new Futenma relocation plan

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NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
December 13, 2009

Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa stated at a party held on Dec. 12 to celebrate his appointment as cabinet minister in Nagano City that with regard to the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station, "the Prime Minister is probably aiming at drawing up a new plan that will respect the Okinawan people's wish not to build (a military base) in Henoko as agreed upon between Japan and the U.S." This statement indicates that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama is considering a new relocation site other than the coastal area of Camp Schwab. The above was revealed by a participant in the party.

Kitazawa reportedly also indicated that the relocation of the Futenma base to the coastal area of Camp Schwab under the current plan will be difficult in light of the political situation in Okinawa.

(23) PNP policy chief Shimoji gets impression U.S. poised to make proposals to reduce Okinawa's burden significantly, urges early solution on Futenma relocation

SANKEI ONLINE (Full)
14:01, December 14, 2009

People's New Party (PNP) policy chief Mikio Shimoji met with Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa at the Ministry of Defense at noon on Dec. 14 to report to him the discussions with the U.S. side on the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) and other issues during his recent trip to the U.S. Shimoji conveyed his impression that "postponement (of the decision) will bring about a rift in the Japan-U.S. relationship of trust, so a decision should be made at an early date." Kitazawa reportedly responded with: "We will make various proposals and let Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama decide."

After the meeting, Shimoji told reporters: "I had the impression that the U.S. is poised to make proposals to reduce the burden (on Okinawa) significantly."

Shimoji met with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State (for East Asian and Pacific Affairs) Kurt Campbell and other officials in Washington. The U.S. side indicated that if Japan agrees to the relocation of the Futenma base to the coastal area of Camp Schwab

(in Nago City) under the existing Japan-U.S. agreement, it will take measures to reduce the burden on Okinawa. It is asking the Japanese government to make a decision by Dec. 18.

(24) Conclusion to Futenma relocation issue by Upper House election; three ruling parties making final adjustments to map out government policy by Dec. 15

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 1) (Full)
December 13, 2009

Naka Yoshida

Tokyo

The government/ruling coalition has began making final arrangements to hold on Dec. 15 a basic policy cabinet meeting at the level of the heads of the three ruling parties to map out the government's

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policy on the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, according to a government source on Dec. 12. The government will set up a study group (working team) composed of working-level members of the three parties to look into new possible relocation sites without determining a relocation site at present. The government will aim at an early conclusion - before the House of Councillors election next summer. With the team likely to reach an agreement to include funds connected with the Henoko relocation plan in the fiscal 2010 state budget, the government will not give up on the existing (Henoko relocation) plan. The three parties will study concrete amounts.

In deference to the United States, the working team will not call off the ongoing environmental impact assessment that is premised on the existing relocation plan.

Although the U.S. side is calling for the early implementation of the existing plan, the government will give up on making a decision before year's end in view of growing expectations in Okinawa for relocation out of the prefecture and of the likelihood that, if the government decides to implement the existing plan, the Social Democratic Party will leave the coalition government, making it difficult to run the administration.

The government source also indicated that there is a possibility that Tokyo will return to the existing plan in the event the three-party working team tasked with studying new sites fails to reach a conclusion.

Since Dec. 7, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has discussed the government's response with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa, and Minister for Okinawa Seiji Maehara.

Some in the government/ruling coalition are also looking into ways to disperse the functions of the Futenma base, such as building on the land portion of Camp Schwab helipads for relocating Futenma's helicopter unit there, and relocating fixed-wing aircraft- training to Kadena Air Base and Kansai Airport.

(25) U.S. government proposes to move part of Futenma training program to Higashi Fuji on condition of Japan agreeing to existing plan

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 1) (Full)
December 13, 2009

Tokyo

The U.S. government has mapped out "measures to reduce the burden on Okinawa" including a plan to shift part of Futenma Air Station helicopter and ground units' exercises to the Higashi Fuji Training Area in the event the Hatoyama administration accepts the Japan-U.S. agreement to relocate Futenma to the Henoko district in Nago, it was learned on Dec. 12. Washington also presented a plan to include an environmental clause in the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement

(SOFA) in compliance with Okinawa's request. Washington also urged Tokyo to decide its policy by Dec. 18, the deadline for submission of requests for the U.S. fiscal 2011 budget. Washington also suggested it might forgo earmarking spending for a Guam relocation plan in the fiscal 2011 budget if Tokyo does not agree to the existing plan.

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Japan urged to make decision by Dec. 18

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell and others conveyed this policy to Mikio Shimoji, the policy research committee head of the People's New Party (PNP), who is visiting the United States.

Shimoji will inform Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama of the U.S. side's views early next week, saying that he visited the United States after making arrangements with the prime minister's office (Kantei). According to Shimoji, the U.S. side expressed at the Dec. 4 Japan-U.S. ministerial-level working group meeting its readiness to move some training programs from Futenma to another U.S. base as a means to reduce the burden on Okinawa.

The Japanese government plans to discuss the government's response at meetings of the Ministerial Council on Basic Policies of the three ruling parties starting nearly next week. "The time has come to decide whether to abandon the Henoko plan before making new proposals," Shimoji said after the talks.

Specifically, the U.S. side presented a plan to move part of Futenma helicopter and Marines ground unit exercises from Okinawa to the Higashi Fuji Training Area, which is being jointly used by Japan and the United States. The U.S. side stopped short of presenting any timeline or the size of the relocation.

Shimoji is exploring ways to move the fighter training program from Kadena Air Base to Kansai Airport in Osaka. Shimoji said that the U.S. side showed an interest in such an idea, saying, "If there is a concrete plan to use Kansai Airport, we will consider it positively."

To the U.S. side, which calls for the early implementation of the existing plan, Shimoji explained the complex Japanese political situation, including the fact that the current coalition government is composed of the Democratic Party of Japan, the Social Democratic Party, and the PNP, and that the Okinawa gubernatorial election will be held next fall.

The talks were held at the State Department attended by Principal Deputy Assistant of State Joseph Donovan and State Department Office of Japanese Affairs Director Kevin Maher, in addition to Campbell.

(26) Prime Minister: We have not received a formal request

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 1) (Full)
December 13, 2009

The U.S. government has reportedly urged Japan to make a decision by Dec. 18 on the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station. Asked by the press about his view on such a report in Tokyo on Dec. 12, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama indicated that the government will confirm the facts, saying, "We have not received such a request directly from the United States." On the Japanese government's policy, he also said: "We are finalizing our policy. We haven't received such a proposal formally from the U.S. government, so I cannot comment any further."

The Prime Minister added: "The government has yet to be briefed on what Mr. (Mikio) Shimoji discussed. We will study the U.S. government's ideas conveyed via Mr. Shimoji, including the facts."

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(27) Proposal to postpone Futenma solution by five months emerges in

the cabinet

YOMIURI (Top play) (Full)
Evening, December 14, 2009

A proposal to postpone a solution to the issue of the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) to after the FY2010 budget and other bills are enacted has emerged in the cabinet.

People's New Party (PNP) leader Shizuka Kamei met with PNP policy chief Mikio Shimoji, who just returned from a trip to the U.S., on the Futenma issue at a hotel in Tokyo on the evening of Dec. 13. According to Shimoji, Kamei told him at the meeting that the prime minister's office (Kantei) is considering delaying the government's decision by around five months. The Prime Minister himself has mentioned making a decision sometime between the mayoral election in Nago, the location of the Futenma relocation site, Camp Schwab, under the current relocation plan, in January and the Okinawa gubernatorial election to be held before the incumbent governor's term expires in December 2010. There is also an opinion in the government and the ruling parties that making a decision after the FY10 budget and the related bills are enacted will minimize the impact on the steering of the administration.

Meanwhile, Parliamentary Secretary of Defense Akihisa Nagashima also stressed during a Fuji TV program on Dec. 13: "The two new administrations should first discuss the role of the Japan-U.S. security alliance in the East Asian strategic situation. They can move on to discuss specific bases in the end. This is not something that can be resolved in a week or two."

However, other government and ruling party officials favor an early response because the U.S. government has asked at the meeting with Shimoji, for example, for a decision by Dec. 18. In this connection, Kamei invited Social Democratic Party (SDP) leader Consumer Affairs Minister Mizuho Fukushima to meet on Dec. 14, but Fukushima is reluctant to meet since the SDP's policy of seeking Futenma's relocation out of Okinawa or out of Japan remains unchanged.

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama is expected to meet with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa, and Okinawa Affairs Minister Seiji Maehara on Dec. 14. He told reporters in front of his official residential quarters in the morning that "the government will make a decision shortly. This will change depending on the U.S.'s response (at discussions with the U.S. side from now). Various solutions are conceivable." Hatoyama also met with Japanese Communist Party Chairman Kazuo Shii at the Diet in the morning. Shii demanded the immediate closure and unconditional withdrawal of the Futenma base. Hatoyama said: "The Japan-U.S. agreement is also important. I am agonizing over how to resolve this issue."

(28) U.S. proposals for reducing Okinawa's burden meant to put pressure on Japan on Futenma relocation negotiations

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Full)
December 13, 2009

Takumi Takimoto

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The U.S. government, having been forced into a corner in the negotiations on the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station, has made new proposals for reducing Okinawa's burden. Meanwhile, the Japanese side has agreed to hold renewed consultations among the three ruling parties, and the Ministerial Committee on Basic Policies will begin deliberations early next week. With the U.S. now making concessions, the focus of attention is on Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's decision.

At a room in the U.S. State Department in Washington on Dec. 11, People's New Party (PNP) policy chief Mikio Shimoji told Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell and other U.S. officials: "If the U.S. government is unable to take the responsibility (for the

consequences), why is it saying 'relocate to Henoko'? The one who says 'do it' also bears responsibility." In a strong tone he pointed out how difficult it is to relocate the Futenma base to Henoko in Nago City, which the U.S. side is pushing for.

The meeting between Shimoji and Campbell and other U.S. officials around lunch time lasted over two hours and 30 minutes. According to an informed source, Campbell had planned to cancel the meeting with Shimoji, but Kevin Maher, State Department Japan desk director, told him, "You should definitely meet him," so the meeting was set up. It is also evident that the U.S. side wanted to put pressure on the Japanese side through a channel other than the official Japan-U.S. working group.

Normally, this would have been a meeting over lunch, but because there was "heated argument" throughout, not even coffee was served. Toward the end of the meeting, Shimoji even said sarcastically: "Has America run out of coffee?"

The U.S. side asked that Japan come up with a conclusion by Dec. 18, when the U.S. budget request process for FY2010 is scheduled to be completed, saying: "It will be difficult to make budget allocations after Dec. 18." They also reiterated that "if Henoko relocation is not implemented, bases south of Kadena will not be returned and there will be no relocation (of Marines in Okinawa) to Guam."

Even at this stage, the U.S. government was taking an "intimidating" stance. However, the construction of the military base in Guam is partly being undertaken to meet the U.S. forces' needs. It appears that the U.S. government, which needs to explain the budget requests for Guam to Congress, will be caught in a serious dilemma between Congress and uncompliant Hatoyama in Japan.

About four hours before the meeting in Washington took place, the three leaders of the ruling coalition parties of the Hatoyama administration met at a Japanese restaurant in Roppongi, Tokyo. During the dinner that lasted about two hours and 30 minutes, Social Democratic Party (SDP) leader Mizuho Fukushima handed the documents she prepared to Hatoyama and PNP leader Shizuka Kamei. These documents, including reports on the dugong lawsuit in the U.S., were meant to show how unfeasible relocation to Henoko is.

Fukushima appeared to be relieved after the meeting. She told reporters: "I am glad that the three of us agreed on pooling our wisdom and continuing discussions among the three parties." When asked if relocation sites other than Henoko will be considered, she was momentarily at a loss for a response before stating: "Well, we are looking at all the options," thus implying that Henoko has not

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been ruled out.

The three party leaders' meeting confirmed that the solution to the Futenma relocation issue will not be decided by the cabinet alone and that the SDP and the PNP will be involved. The Hatoyama cabinet is back to the starting line at the time when the administration was launched. Discussions at the Ministerial Committee on Basic Policies early next week will hold the key to this issue.

(29) Ozawa power: Largest-ever delegation consisting of 640 participants, including about 140 DPJ lawmakers

ASAHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
December 10, 2009

Shuichi Honda, Tetsuya Watanabe and Koichi Furuya (Beijing)

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa arrived in China along with some 140 DPJ lawmakers on Dec. 10. The number of delegation members, was the highest ever at 600, including private citizens. Domestic views of the influence-yielding Ozawa are split. However, China welcomed Ozawa with open arms.

Ozawa told President Hu, "I am the commander": Critics say he's flaunting his influence

The delegation includes 143 DPJ lawmakers, which is about one-third of all DPJ Diet members. Adding the supporters of each lawmaker that participated in the trip, there are 640 people in the delegation. The number of participants is about 200 more than that of the previous delegation. Participants flew to Beijing on five planes departing from Haneda, Narita, and Kansai. Seventeen buses were waiting for them. Participants, who paid about 200,000 yen in traveling expenses out of their own pockets, will, with the exception of a meeting with President Hu, will spend their time visiting places of historic interest and scenic beauty.

The large delegation reflects Ozawa's great influence in the party. Of the 143 first-term lawmakers, 79, or about 40 percent, took part in the delegation.

Before entering into talks with Hu, Ozawa introduced the lawmakers accompanying him: "More than half of them are first-term lawmakers. They have become legislators by securing around 100,000 votes each." Hu shook hands with every participant.

Even with a grand delegation in tow, Ozawa still did not seem satisfied. During the talks he expressed his eagerness to fight in the Upper House election next summer, even saying: "I will recruit candidates and train them. I will aim for victory." He then said, "I will leave the administration to Prime Minister Hatoyama." Calling himself the commander in chief of the field army, Ozawa spoke of his aspiration: "I want to devote myself to that role (until the Upper House election is over)."

As such, many lawmakers participated in the delegation not to participate in Japan-China exchange but to get to know Ozawa. One first-term lawmaker said: "I have never spoken with Mr. Ozawa. This is a good opportunity to get to know him as a person." A junior lawmaker who decided not to participate, giving priority to activities in his constituency, was teased by a lawmaker of other party, who said, "Are you all right? You've got guts."

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There are also more aloof attitudes circulating both inside and outside the party. The same junior lawmaker who did not participate lamented, "Mr. Ozawa never forced us to join the delegation, but there is still an atmosphere that makes us think that it would be unwise not to."

China welcomes Ozawa with eye on his influence

The Chinese side welcomed Ozawa. After President Hu met with him, First Secretary Lu Hao of the Chinese Communist Youth League, an organization that trains young elites, where Hu also served in the top post, met him. China also invited all the delegation participants to a welcome dinner party held at the Great Hall of the People.

During the talks, Hu brought up the change in government in Japan. According to those at the meeting, Hu said: "China and Japan were able to deepen their relations even though the DPJ assumed power. The DPJ has survived the transition period after the change in the government." He thus declared that China will continue its present relations with Japan, despite the shift in power.

China has promptly responded to the "political leadership" advocated by the Hatoyama administration. It thinks that under the new administration, it would be quicker to approach influential politicians directly instead of using the Foreign Ministry's diplomatic channel. It thinks that Ozawa is the most influential person.

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, who met with Ozawa in the Diet building while in Japan on Nov. 20, brought up a free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries.

Yang: "I would like Secretary General Ozawa to exercise his influence to have the Japanese government promote research on an FTA."

Ozawa: "We must persuade people in various domestic industry circles."

Shanghai Institute for International Studies Academic Committee Deputy Director Wu Jinan pointed out, "Mr. Ozawa's philosophies are the mainstay of the DPJ administration's foreign affairs and security policies."

Ozawa might find such a stance of the Chinese side advantageous. His pet argument since 1993, the year when he published "Blueprint for Japan," is to serve as a bridge between the West and Asia." He stresses that relations between Japan and the U.S., and relations between Japan and China should be equal. This stance has also been expressed in a statement he made regarding the U.S., Japan's ally. He said that the Seventh Fleet will suffice as the U.S. presence in the Far East."

The Hatoyama cabinet has complicated Japan's relations with the U.S. over the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corp's Futenma Air Station. On the 10th, when Ozawa arrived in Beijing, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama was in Bali, Indonesia. He remained indecisive over the Futenma issue, saying, "Before the end of the year I would like to decide on the policy I will take." The schism in Japan-U.S. relations is widening under the Hatoyama administration. Ozawa, who

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has launched party diplomacy by leading the delegation, sent a tacit message to audiences both at home and abroad, stressing that Japan and China are becoming closer.

Emerging from the talks with Hu, Ozawa told reporters, "I am not here to discuss political issues." However, he did not forget to boast about the length and depth of Japan-China exchanges he has pursued. He said: "Chinese leaders and government officials have always responded to me in a serious and appropriate manner. That was true ever since I was an opposition party member even before joining the DPJ."

(30) PM Hatoyama requests making an exception for PRC Vice President Xi Jinping's audience with Emperor

ASAHI (Top play) (Excerpts)
December 12, 2009

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada announced at a news conference on Dec. 11 that Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping will meet with the Emperor on the morning of Dec. 15. The Imperial Household Agency (IHA) had asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to submit requests for audiences with foreign dignitaries at least one month in advance out of consideration for the burden on the Emperor's health and fairness among foreign countries, but MOFA first made its request on Nov. 26, less than one month before the proposed meeting. The prime minister's office (Kantei) reportedly made a strong request to the IHA again on Dec. 7 and 10, saying that this was "by the Prime Minister's order, in consideration of the importance of the Japan-China relationship." IHA Grand Steward Shingo Haketa assembled members of the media hastily on the afternoon of Dec. 11 to explain what happened. He expressed concern, since this is an issue bearing on the Emperor's role as the symbol of the nation under the Constitution.

(Commentary by reporter Hiroki Arima)

The Hatoyama cabinet has broken the convention followed by the IHA on the Emperor's audience with foreign guests. This may not be a problem from the standpoint of "breaking away from reliance on bureaucrats," but changing a convention followed over the years to prevent "using the Emperor for political purposes" may lead to a serious degeneration of the Imperial System. Therefore, this issue needs to be handled more cautiously and rigorously.

Since its inauguration, the Hatoyama cabinet has reviewed the postwar political rules in its attempt to promote political leadership. The "one-month rule" mentioned by Grand Steward Haketa, which is an agreement between MOFA and the IHA, will probably also become a subject of review.

However, past administrations have exercised strict self-restraint with regard to Emperor's words and actions based on lessons learned from the prewar period. The one-month rule is part of such efforts. The deputy chief cabinet secretary, a former bureaucrat, traditionally mediates the coordination process between the Kantei and the IHA on scheduling, serving as a "filter." If Hatoyama intends to step into an area that has been entrusted to the IHA in the past, he has to explain the basis of this decision and formulate new transparent and fair rules.

It is questionable why Hatoyama was late in making his request. If

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this was in consideration of Democratic Party of Japan Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa and other officials who were about to embark on a visit to China, it is an action that could embroil the Emperor in politics. Inasmuch as the cabinet takes responsibility for the Emperor's official acts, it has an obligation to give a clear explanation.

(31) Editorial: The Emperor and China's vice president: Arbitrary setting of meeting could lead to future trouble

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
December 12, 2009

The government has announced that Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping is arriving in Japan on Dec. 14 and will have an audience with the Emperor on Dec. 15.

It was revealed that normal procedures were not followed in handling the Chinese side's request for an audience and the meeting was set up through an order from Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama to the Imperial Household Agency to arrange for this meeting. This could be considered a case of using (the Emperor) for political purposes and may lead to trouble in the future.

The existing rule is that written requests for the Emperor to meet with foreign dignitaries need to be submitted at least one month in advance. However, the Chinese side made its request in late November, which was less than one month before the proposed meeting. Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs first informed the Chinese side that its request for an audience with the Emperor had been rejected. This was the reasonable thing to do for a sovereign country.

However, the Chinese side was not satisfied with the answer, so it repeated its request for an audience with the Emperor, on the ground that the meeting is "critical for the success of Vice President Xi's visit to Japan." Democratic Party of Japan Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa urged Prime Minister Hatoyama to try to set up the meeting, so the Prime Minister ordered Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano to look into the possibility of arranging the meeting.

Needless to say, the Chinese request was unreasonable. The mediation efforts by Mr. Ozawa and Prime Minister Hatoyama were also very questionable.

The one-month rule is for the sake of smooth coordination of the Emperor's hectic schedule. So far, the rule has been followed strictly and exceptions have only been made for meetings with foreign ambassadors in Tokyo leaving Japan in haste. While Mr. Xi is considered a likely successor to President Hu Jintao, that should not be a reason for making an exception.

The Emperor is the symbol of the state and the unity of the Japanese people under the Constitution. The government should strictly refrain from using him for political purposes. Yet, it is possible that the forthcoming meeting arranged for the Emperor and the Chinese vice president will be used for political purposes and one-sided propaganda.

The Emperor visited China in October 1992, three years after the Tiananmen Incident. This was at a time when China was under harsh criticism from the Western countries. The Miyazawa cabinet at that

time almost forcibly pushed for this visit despite the opposition of a majority of the people.

Consequently, the Emperor's visit to China led to the relaxation of the Western countries' sanctions on China. It is clear from the memoirs of the Chinese foreign minister at that time that the visit was used for political purposes.

The Hatoyama cabinet's disregard of existing rules in granting China's request sends out the message that "if you push hard, Japan will agree" to the Chinese side. This weakness may be taken advantage of in future negotiations with China. Blatant "dual diplomacy" is also questionable. We urge the Hatoyama cabinet to reconsider.

(32) Ozawa apologizes for Japan's colonial rule of South Korea, calling it unfortunate period

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
Evening, December 12, 2009

Eiji Tsukiyama, Seoul

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa, now visiting South Korea, on the morning of Dec. 12 delivered a speech at Kookmin University in Seoul. During the speech to about 200 students he apologized for Japan's colonial rule (of the Korean Peninsula) for 36 years. He told the audience that he wants young people to create a new age.

Ozawa said: "There was an unfortunate period for our country and your country in modern history. It is a historical fact, for which Japan and the Japanese people must apologize."

He continued: "However, if we just continue to say this, it will do the future of our two countries no good. I believe that you, young people, are aware that it is necessary to surmount past problems and work together for friendly and amicable bilateral relations." He also said, "Japan must proactively formulate a plan for peace and stabilization of Northeast Asia."

Ozawa then referred to his visit to China, his previous stop. Noting that the Northeast Asian region, including the Korean Peninsula, is unstable, he said, "We must make the region stable and peaceful through a relationship of trust among Japan, China, and South Korea."

(33) Poll: 63 PERCENT feel kinship with S. Korea

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
December 13, 2009

The Cabinet Office yesterday released the results of its public opinion survey on foreign relations. In the survey, the proportion of those who answered that they feel friendly toward South Korea reached an all-time high of 63.1 PERCENT, up 6 percentage points from the last survey conducted in 2008. In addition, the proportion of those who think bilateral relations between Japan and South Korea are in good shape was also at an all-time high of 66.5 PERCENT.

(34) Prime Minister Hatoyama's words lack weight and put him into a difficult situation

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NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 11, 2009

Jun Iiyama, Bali

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has been suffering as a result of his own past remarks. He mentioned a plan to hold a Japan-U.S. summit

meeting in connection with the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Station in Okinawa, the most pressing issue between Japan and the United States, but the U.S. side has not paid any attention to Hatoyama's idea. Therefore, his plan has been put on hold. With regard to his alleged falsified donation scandal, as well, Hatoyama's explanations have become untenable. He has basically withdrawn the goal of capping the new issuance of government bonds in the fiscal 2010 budget at 44 trillion yen. The Prime Minister has been causing problems for himself with his own "reckless statements."

Growing sense of distrust

Yesterday in Bali, Indonesia, Hatoyama said, "Since considerable time will be spent on extensive discussions on climate change, it will be difficult to hold a meeting." He admitted that it would be difficult to realize his previous plan to meet with U.S. President Barack Obama on the sidelines of the summit meeting of the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15). Just three days ago he told the press corps about his intention to convey the government policy regarding the Futenma relocation base to the President. However, he later corrected his remarks, saying, "I will decide on a policy before the end of the year." The U.S. side has grown increasingly distrustful of Hatoyama. In the meeting in November, Hatoyama said to Obama, "I want you to trust me." But he keeps going back and forth. Even in the government, some people are voicing criticism, with one official remarking: "Anyone would wonder what that statement was supposed to mean." Also a ruling party lawmaker went so far as to say, "This means that (Hatoyama) compared the U.S. and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and he chose the SDP."

Hatoyama mentioned the summit meeting plan without carrying out coordination through diplomatic channels. The U.S. side, however, announced that discussion at the ministerial-level working group would be preferable, rejecting Hatoyama's plan. U.S. Ambassador John Roos, a member of the working group, called on Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada at the ministry on Dec. 7 and again on the 10th. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano has been desperately trying to put an end to speculation that Futenma relocation has gone back to the drawing board, presenting the outlook that the government will make a decision after COP15.

Frequent discrepancies in the views voiced by cabinet ministers have also been noticeable. Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa visited Guam, which the SDP has proposed as a relocation site for Futenma. While he was there, he said, "(Guam) is not on the government-to-government negotiating table, and such a direction has not been decided in Japan either." Since his comment incited a backlash from the SDP, Hirano cautioned Kitazawa over the phone.

(35) Japan, U.S. agree to liberalize aviation markets

NIKKEI (Top Play) (Excerpts)

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Evening, December 12, 2009

Masakuni Oshirabe, Washington

The governments of Japan and the U.S. agreed in aviation talks in Washington on Dec. 11 to conclude an open skies accord to give their airlines freedom in setting routes and the number of flights in principle. Once this agreement takes effect, the civil aviation markets of the two countries will be revitalized, and more convenient services and lower airfares can be expected. The pact could also enable Japanese and U.S. airline companies to strengthen their partnerships. The pact is expected to come into effect by next fall.

The meetings between Japan and the U.S. this time were working-level talks, and the agreement still needs to be finalized by the transport ministers of the two countries. At present, three airline companies, including Japan Airlines and United Airlines, from each of the two countries are allowed to set routes and other details without any restrictions in principle, but the new pact will give

all airlines freedom.

Key points in Japan-U.S. agreement on liberalizing civil aviation markets

Q Japan and the U.S. agreed in effect to conclude an open skies accord to give their airlines freedom in setting routes and the number of flights in principle.

Q Make it possible to initiate procedures to place (airline alliances) outside the reach of the U.S. Antimonopoly Act.

Q Give Japanese and U.S. air carriers landing and departure slots for four round trips daily late at night and early in the morning between U.S. cities and Haneda airport, to which slots for more international flights will be added following the opening of the new runway.

Q Reduce the 28 PERCENT share U.S. carriers hold over the slots at Narita International Airport.

(36) Japanese company acquires right to develop oil field in Iraq

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top play) (Excerpts)
December 13, 2009

Yasushi Uchida, Cairo

The second round of open competitive bidding for the development of Iraq's huge oil fields and gas fields took place in Bagdad on Dec. 12, following the first round held on the previous day. The consortium formed by Japan Petroleum Exploration (JAPEX) and Petronas, Malaysia's state-run oil company, successfully won the right to develop the Gharraf oil field in Southern Iraq. This is the first time for a Japanese company to win the right to develop an oil field in Iraq.

Amid competition to secure natural resources becoming fierce due to the rise of emerging countries, such as China and India, Japan has won a bid to develop a valuable "rising sun oil field," in Iraq, which has 115 billion barrels of confirmed crude oil reserves - the third largest amount in the world.

The Gharraf oil field, located about 300 kilometers southeast of Bagdad, has roughly 860 million barrels of confirmed oil reserves.

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According to the Japanese Embassy in Baghdad, the Japanese side's share of the development right is 40 percent, and that of Malaysia is 60 percent. The current production capacity of the Gharraf oil field is 140,000 barrels a day. The consortium plans to increase the capacity to 230,000 barrels a day in 13 years. According to the Iraq Oil Ministry, the contract period is 20 years and it can be extended.

(37) Editorial: President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
December 12, 2009

We wondered whether U.S. President Obama, who received the Nobel Peace Prize, would be caught on the horns of dilemma between the reality that the U.S. is fighting two wars and his ideal of realizing a world free from nuclear weapons. No, that was not the case. The President, in delivering his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, used the award ceremony as a venue for declaring his resolve to fight the war on terror.

In the U.S., there has been widespread criticism over the fact that President Obama was awarded with a Nobel Peace Prize even though he has no track record since he has only been in office for a year. There has also been concern that his idealistic argument calling for a world free of nuclear weapons is detached from the reality that the U.S. is a nuclear super power.

While being aware of that, the Nobel Committee has in a way tied the President down with the Peace Prize so that he will not deviate from

his ideals. The President, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, brought the audience back to reality by saying, "I am the Commander-in-Chief of a nation in the midst of two wars."

He then pointed out, "The belief that peace is desirable is rarely enough to achieve it" and "Peace requires responsibility. Peace entails sacrifice." He thus stressed the legitimacy of reinforcing 30,000 troops in Afghanistan.

In Japan, because of his speech delivered in Prague, President Obama has been considered as a priest of peace who aims at eliminating nuclear weapons.

However, his diplomatic strategy that does not require the use of force includes three (strategic) elements: (1) battle of law; (2) battle of public opinion; and (3) battle of psychology - meaning enlightening the public after securing legal supremacy and turning it to benefit his own country. We should realize that behind his idealism about eliminating nuclear weapons is the aim of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons or their falling into the hands of international terrorists.

In addition, there was a careful calculation made with the national interest in mind as can be seen in his warning against China's nuclear buildup and declaring on maintaining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In that sense, there is no inconsistency between the Prague speech in April and the Oslo speech this time. The only differences were the terms used.

In the speech delivered in Prague, the President tactfully gave the

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impression of his ethical supremacy by advocating the U.S.'s moral responsibility and pledging to seek a world free of nuclear weapons. However, his true intention can be found in the statements "As long as nuclear weapons exist, I will try to deter any enemies," and "I will create a system under which one who has broken the rules must face the consequences."

People like Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, who think that President Obama is the priest of pacifism because of his speech, are far too optimistic. What the prime minister should do is calculate the benefits that can be shared by Japan and the U.S. and the costs to be paid by both countries.

(38) Editorial: President Obama should produce actual results to live up to honor of Nobel Peace Prize

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
December 12, 2009

In October 1962, when the Soviet Union placed nuclear missiles in Cuba, (then) U.S. President John F. Kennedy referred to the possibility of a global nuclear war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and spoke in public that even if such an event was unavoidable, the American people had no need to be seized with fear. Fortunately, the Soviet Union later took away the missiles, so a nuclear war did not take place. This resolute speech, linked to his tragic death (assassination), contributed to having Kennedy labeled as a great president.

In a speech he delivered as he received the Nobel peace prize, U.S. President Barack Obama stressed the significance of the use of armed force, probably aiming to avoid giving the image that he is weak. He must also have calculated that it would be troublesome if his Afghanistan military strategy was undermined because of the Nobel peace prize. He lauded Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, preachers of nonviolent action, but he added: "A nonviolent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies." The President then laid out circumstances in which war is justified.

Obama said in the speech: "Evil does exist in the world." This remark even reminded us of previous President George W Bush's description (of Iraq, Iran and North Korea) as an "axis of evil." Of course, we know that President Obama is not a leader who easily uses the superpower's military power and basically agree with his

insistence on the need to depend on military power in some cases in order to preserve peace.

The U.S. has so far carried out a number of military operations. Recent ones include the attack on Afghanistan and the Iraq war under the previous President Bush (Republican); several air strikes on Iraq and on Yugoslavia under former President Bill Clinton (Democrat); the invasion of Panama and the Gulf War under former President George H.W. Bush (Republican); and the invasion of Grenada under President Ronald Reagan (Republican).

By chance or not, in many cases large-scale military action was taken just before presidential elections in which the incumbents were seeking reelection. A diplomatic approach depending on power is a distinguishing feature of the United States. President Obama might also be pressed to decide to use armed force against countries other than Afghanistan. It is also conceivable that the U.S. will be more deeply involved in the war against Afghanistan, which should be a

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"just war."

On the other hand, in dealing with North Korea, the U.S. remains unable to take an approach depending on power. In the U.S., however, it is often said that although military power can be compared to hammer, all problems can't necessarily be compared to nails. There are various means to resolve problems. Japan renewed its call on the Obama administration to take a powerful diplomatic approach in dealing with North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, which pose a danger to its ally Japan.

President Obama has so far delivered keynote speeches several times. In the speeches, he has fully expressed his vision. From now on, the president should demonstrate the ability to implement his vision. It is more constructive to place expectations on Obama's future activities, rather than criticizing that it is too early for him to receive the prize.

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